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GOVT TO SET UP 12 NEW INDUSTRIAL CITIES TO BOOST MANUFACTURING

The Union cabinet on Wednesday approved 12 new industrial cities in 10 states with an estimated investment of ₹28,602 crore

PROJECTS EXPECTED TO CREATE 40 LAKH JOBS

New industrial areas will come up in Kerala's Palakkad, Andhra Pradesh's Orvakal and Kopparthy and Telangana's Zaheerabad and across eight more locations in seven states. Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the projects would be completed by 2027 and would create about 10 lakh direct and 30 lakh indirect job opportunities | P11

THREE NEW RAILWAY PROJECTS GREENLIGHTED

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved three railway projects worth ₹6,456 crore covering Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh to boost connectivity and line capacity
- The Centre also expanded the scope of Agricultural Infrastructure Fund to strengthen the farm-related infrastructure in the country

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MORE CITIES TO GET PRIVATE FM RADIO AS GOVT TO HOLD THIRD BATCH OF ASCENDING E-AUCTIONS

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

REPORTS OF CLASHES IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS; ATTENDANCE THIN AT GOVT OFFICES, SCHOOLS, COLLEGES

Amid sporadic violence, bandh response mixed

IMA suspends ex-principal's membership

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Wednesday suspended the membership of former RG Kar Medical College and Hospital principal Dr Sandip Ghosh. The suspension came upon requests from the IMA's West Bengal unit

Security measures

Security audit of district hospitals, night patrolling and regulated access at large health facilities were among the slew of measures the Centre asked states to implement to prevent violence against medical professionals

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @ Kolkata

SPORADIC incidents of violence were reported from across the state on Wednesday during the 12-hour bandh called by the BJP against the police action on students who took part in a march to Nabanna, the state secretariat, the previous day.

They were protesting against the horrific rape and murder of a PG trainee doctor at the state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital on Augest 9 and demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

While the bandh evoked mixed response, reports of BJP workers clashing with the police and the ruling Trinamool Congress activists poured in from several districts. Shots were fired at a local BJP leader at Bhatpara in North 24-Parganas, triggering violence.

Former Barrackpore MP and BJP leader Arjun Singh and his TMC counterpart Somnath Shyam were involved in a showdown, with both leaders and their supporters standing face to face in altercation. A BJP supporter was later admitted to a hospital with bullet injuries.

In Kolkata, councillor Sajal Ghosh was arrested from his residence after clashes between BJP and TMC supporters. DC (Central) Indira Mukherjee said Ghosh was arrested for making provocative comments.

At Baguihati in the northern fringes of the city, Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar, accompanied by former MP Debasree Choudhury and senior state party leaders, had an altercation with the police when they tried to stop him. Later, the Union minister blocked CR Avenue outside the state BJP headquarters along with party workers. Leader of the Opposition in the Bengal assembly Suvendu Adhikari led a march in Nandigram.

In Hooghly's Konnagar, TMC and BJP workers clashed in the presence of the police. Tension erupted when BJP workers allegedly asked traders to down their shutters and TMC men prevented them, leading to a fight. Most offices, schools and colleges had thin attendance. P11

BJP activists clash with policemen during the 12-hour Bengal Bandh, at Bowbazar in Kolkata on Wednesday | ANI

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, SAYS PREZ, ASKS NATION TO PROTECT WOMEN

Droupadi Murmu

Rapists to get death in toughened law: Didi

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday said an amendment to existing laws will be passed in the state assembly next week to ensure capital punishment to convicted rapists.

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

EXPRESSING shock and anguish over the alleged rape-murder of a trainee doctor in Kolkata's RG Kar Hospital, President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said, "enough is enough". No civilised society must allow its daughters and sisters to be subjected to such atrocities, she added.

"The nation is bound to be outraged, and so am I," the President wrote in an exclusive signed article for news agency PTI. This is the first time that the President is sharing her views on the incident in Kolkata. Murmu said the time has come to introspect. "Where have we erred? And what can we do to remove the errors? Without finding out the answer to that question, the half of our population cannot live as freely as the other half," she wrote in the article titled *Women's Safety: Enough is Enough*.

Murmu blamed a 'deplorable mindset' for fuelling crimes against women. "Social prejudices as well as some customs and practices have always opposed the expansion of women's rights. This is a rather deplorable mindset. This mindset sees the female as a lesser human being, less powerful, less capable, less intelligent." Those who hold such views see women as an object and it is this objectification that is behind the atrocities, she wrote.

She concluded the article saying, "We owe it to our daughters to remove the hurdles from their path of winning the freedom from fear."

DISTILLERS VS EXCISE DEPT

Liquor shortage in state as excise duty deadlock continues

BALA CHAUHAN @ Bengaluru

KARNATAKA is facing a shortage of Indian Made Liquor (IML). According to sources in the liquor and hospitality industry, the state may run out of IML if the reported stalemate between the distillers and the Excise Department on filing Ex Distillery Price (EDP), as per the new government notification, is not resolved at the earliest.

In the wake of the stalemate, the distillers have not been able to indent their alcohol to Karnataka State Beverages Corporation Limited (KSBCL), which channelises and distributes duty paid liquor to excise licencees in the state.

"This week, the distillers had no transaction with KSBCL because we are unable to file the EDP or the new declared price as per the notification issued on August 23. The Excise Department is not allowing us to do so," claimed sources in the industry.

"The loss to the state exchequer in the absence of any sale to KSBCL may be around Rs 110 crore and Rs 120 crore per day. Besides, if the deadlock continues, the IML stocks in the state will deplete further," they said.

On Wednesday, the distillers met excise officials and appealed to them to approve their new declared prices as per the new notification. "We have asked for an early resolution. There was some positive response, but we have to wait and watch," said industry insiders.

Meanwhile, sources in the government said that they intend to resolve the 'crisis' at the earliest, but it may take at least a week to stabilise the IML inventory. The delay is reportedly being attributed to the scheduled three-day visit of Arvind Panagariya led 16th Finance Commission team to the state from August 29, on which the state machinery is focussed. P4

BEER TO COST MORE?

In a move to increase revenue, the government is likely to increase the AED on craft and draught beer from 150% per bulk litre (pbl) to 185 pc pbl, the sources said. "Beer will be divided into three segments depending upon the percentage of alcohol (v/v). Stronger beer will be priced higher than mild and medium beers," the sources said.

Stray dogs maul morning walker to death in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

A 76-year-old retired teacher was mauled to death by a pack of stray dogs near the Air Force playground at Jalahalli on Wednesday morning.

The deceased has been identified as **Rajdulari Sinha** of Air Force quarters. She was the mother-in-law of an airman.

Sinha was on her morning walk when around 12 stray dogs attacked her at the playground near Air Force East, 7th Residential Camp.

Sinha suffered serious injuries. Though she was rushed to a nearby hospital, the doctors there declared her brought dead. Police have registered an unnatural death case.

Harikrishnan, a resident of the area, said he could not rush to Sinha's rescue because of the compound wall around the Air Force camp. He told *The New Indian Express* that the elderly woman was walking alone in the morning.

"I was at home when the dogs attacked her. I saw the dogs tearing her clothes. As I screamed for help, the dogs ran away and a man rushed to help her. He took her to a nearby hospital. I feel guilty that I couldn't help her because of the compound wall," he said.

According to an official from the BBMP animal husbandry department, six dogs were caught soon after the incident. "They will be under observation for rabies infection. The area will also be monitored for some days," the official said.

'ASKED MoHUA TO GET INVOLVED'

On the possibility of Karnataka opposing the project, a source in Chennai said, "We approached MoHUA, which is the parent body for all Metro rail networks in the country, and asked it to get involved at the initial stage of the project."

B'sandra-Hosur Metro line may face opposition

S LALITHA @ Bengaluru

THE Rs 6,900-crore Bommasandra-Hosur Metro project proposed by Chennai Metro Rail Corporation Limited (CMRL) will have five stations in Karnataka and seven in Tamil Nadu. A detailed feasibility report on the 23-km elevated metro line (12km in Karnataka and 11km in TN) was presented by a team from CMRL to officials of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) on Tuesday.

However, there seems to be resistance from Karnataka to the project as Hosur will emerge as a competitor to the business interests of Bengaluru.

With Tamil Nadu also planning an airport in Hosur, which is likely to attract flyers from South Bengaluru, a metro connectivity with Bengaluru will be a windfall for Hosur.

From Bommasandra, the Yellow Line of Namma Metro links RV Road with an interchange with the Airport Line (Blue Line) at Central Silk Board.

The line will also touch suburban rail and bus depots enroute. BMRCL initiated a project on its own on July 9 to extend the Bommasandra line to Attibele. CONTINUED ON: P2

3 in NIA custody for sending info on Karwar naval base to Pakistan

SUBHASH CHANORA NS @ Karwar

SLEUTHS of NIA took three people into custody on Wednesday for allegedly sending pictures and information related to the INS Kadamba naval base here to enemy countries.

A team of NIA sleuths, including a deputy superintendent of police and three inspectors, took the accused, who worked on a contract basis at the naval base, into their custody in the morning.

They have been identified as Sunil Naik from Todur village in Karwar taluk, Vethan Rhandel from Mudga village and Akshay Ravi Naik of Halavalli village.

They were taken into custody after a few accused in NIA custody spilled the beans. "The NIA arrested one Deepak in Hyderabad in 2023 for sending information related to the naval base to Pakistan and other enemy countries. During interrogation, Deepak revealed that Sunil Naik, Vethan Thandel and Akshay Naik sent him pictures and information pertaining to the naval base and he forwarded them to the agents of the enemy countries," sources said.

Akshay Naik, who was with the naval base earlier, moved to Goa where he worked in a canteen. He was taken into custody in Goa. The other two were taken into custody from the naval base. Sunil Naik was released after issuing a notice, while the other two were taken to a secret location for interrogation, the sources said.

₹840-cr project to make state coast plastic free

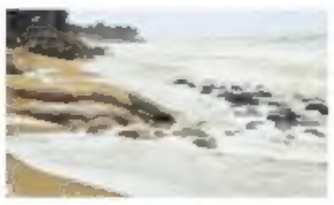
VINCENT D'SOUZA @ Mangaluru

THE Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) on August 19 approved the World Bank funded Rs 840 crore Karnataka Strengthening of Coastal Resilience Economy (K-Shore) project to make the state's 320-km coast plastic waste free.

Under this project, the Forest, Fisheries, and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) departments will implement various initiatives to improve the capacity of the coast to withstand pollution, besides creating employment opportunities for locals.

The project also intends to address sea erosion and marine conservation, which is expected to give a fillip to conservation of Olive Ridley turtles and dolphins along the coast.

Dr K Karikalan, conservator of forests, Mangaluru Circle, said under the project, the forest department will take up mangrove cultivation, plant bamboo and cane saplings at



estuaries, shores and other areas along the coast, which will act as a vegetative trap. The department will also construct culverts, check dams and causeways, and take up soil moisture works along the banks of 16 rivers that originate in the Western Ghats and enter the Arabian Sea. At estuaries, trash barriers will be set up to collect plastic waste and beach cleaning work will be taken up involving fishermen and other local communities.

Among others, the focus will be on pilgrim centres such as Kukke Subramanya temple, Dharmasthala, Kateel Durgaparameshwari temple, Sri Krishna temple in Udupi, Kollur Mookambika temple, etc. P7

EXPRESS READ

ED slaps fine of Rs 908-cr on DMK MP, kin

Chennai: The Enforcement Directorate, Chennai, has slapped a penalty of Rs 908 crore on DMK MP S Jagathrakshakan and his family members for alleged violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act. Properties worth Rs 89.19 crore, seized in 2020, were also ordered to be confiscated, the ED said | P7

Rape case registered against actor Siddique

T'Puram: The Museum police on Wednesday registered a rape case against actor Siddique based on the complaint filed by a woman actor. The woman mailed her complaint to the State Police Chief on Tuesday, alleging that Siddique had sexually assaulted her at a hotel in Thiruvananthapuram in 2016 | P7

$8.5-BILLION GIFT

Antitrust nod to mega RIL, Disney merger

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

THE Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Wednesday approved the $8.5-billion merger of Reliance Industries and Walt Disney Co's Indian media assets, after the two parties offered to assuage concerns over their grip on broadcasting rights for cricket. The antitrust watchdog's decision paves the way for the creation of India's largest broadcasting empire in terms of reach and financial muscle. The CCI's announcement came on the eve of RIL's annual general meeting.

Announced six months ago, the merger deal reportedly faced intense regulatory scrutiny. And the green signal has come after the parties proposed certain modifications to the original transaction structure. The CCI stated that its approval is subject to the compliance of the changes proposed by the parties. It, however, did not divulge the details.

According to reports, Reliance and Disney proposed certain concessions, including assurances that they won't jack up ad rates for streamed cricket matches.

The merger will combine the entertainment businesses (along with certain other identified businesses) of Viacom18, part of Asia's richest billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance group, and Star India Pvt Ltd, wholly owned by The Walt Disney Company.

The JV, expected to be completed by the end of this year or early 2025, will be controlled by the Reliance group with Ambani holding 63% stake. Disney will have the remaining 37%.

Nita Ambani will be the chairperson of the JV while former Disney executive Uday Shankar will come on board as vice-chairperson.